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Nationality Issue and Democratic Transition

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The author's starting point is the claim that, despite integrative tendencies, the number of national states in the world is on the increase. The opposing national interests and conflicts may be mitigated or avoided if the central concepts and issues, the ways of the accommodation of interests and the features of the post-communist transitions are known. The author explains the concepts and issues such as nation, ethnic group, national state, nationalism, protection of minorities, the right to self-determination, decentralisation, autonomy, federalism, consociational democracy, non-territorial autonomy. He focuses on the issues that reflect the current controversies of the global and the national policies. He concludes that, among other things, the national issues are central to the process of transition and that they cannot be ignored (since nations are a reality which must be coped with), that there are principles and mechanisms of the regulation of the conflicting national interests, that democracy and nation-building are not incompatible but contradictory notions, that democratic societies are nationally tolerant, that the resolution of the national question is a prerequisite for democratic transition.

Members of old nations perceive only danger in the new national states. On the other hand, young national movements see in their nation-states the fundamental prerequisite of their existence. At least two ideological projects, liberalism and Marxism, viewed nations as transitory phenomena, which would be made superfluous by the development of the global market and universal globalization.¹ Despite this, the number of nations and nation-states has been steadily on the increase. In 1985 there were 182 states in the world, and the disintegration of the post-communist federations gave rise to seventeen more. Nation-states have not been losing ground. Only the European Union has been transforming from a confederation into a federation.²

¹ See: Anderson, 1990, 15; Avineri, 1991, 638.

² EU directly applies its decisions on the citizens of its member-states, has a common market, controls only the outer borders of the Union, is in the process of introducing the common currency and the central bank, and has been increasing the scope of decisions brought by the majority vote.

Not all nations, and particularly ethnic groups, have their own nation-state.³ Most of these communities will probably never have one. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the proliferation of new states is a stoppable process. The opponents of proliferation claim that the new, increasingly smaller states are incapable of survival and economic development.⁴ No people can be denied the right to its state. The only barrier to this is the condition of political power.

In the early 1990s there was an eruption of national aspirations and an outcrop of new states throughout Central and Eastern Europe and on the territory of the former Soviet Union. These changes resulted in the revival of problems in western Europe and elsewhere (regionalism, suppressed ethnic groups, immigrants). The only exception to this general trend of atomization is the expansion of the EU.⁵

Each change in the situation of national communities is a potential source of conflict, while the emergence of new states produces new minorities and conflicts (Gurr, 37). The new states are nationally more homogeneous than the ones they have stemmed from (Smith, A., 1995, 102-4), thus reducing the long-term possibility of a conflict.⁶

The contemporary national conflicts are not a mere reflection of the civilisational conflicts derived from religious rifts. For Samuel P. Huntington the conflict of civilisations is the biggest threat to international peace, the West and the Rest the fundamental global ethnic division, while demographic expansion of Islam the gravest threat. He uses the conflict of civilisations to explain away all current conflicts: the war in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nagorno-Karabakh, Kashmir.⁷ Huntington's assumptions are *passee*; history is not an eternal repetition of the already seen. Besides, the expansion of

³ Using languages as his starting point, Gellner thinks that there are 8,000 new potential nations (Gellner, 1983, 44). B. Nietschmann estimates that in the world there are between 3,000 and 5,000 groups with distinctive identities, whilst G. Nielsson and R. Jones identify 575 such ethnic groups. World Dictionary of Minorities registers 172 potential new nations (Gurr, 1995, 5).

⁴ Taiwan and Hong-Kong are economically much stronger than China, while Luxembourg, Switzerland and Denmark are much more developed than Brazil, USSR or today Russia, and Slovenia, Czech Republic and Estonia are more prosperous than Ukraine or Russia. Research by Robert A. Dahl and Edward R. Tuft shows that the "prospects for the survival of a state do not depend solely on their size" (the same as "democracy best flourishes in smaller countries", since bigger ones spend more on armament). The analysis of 82 nations by Jack Sawyer proves that the wealth (GNP per capita) and size (population) are two unrelated factors. (Dahl, 1973, 40, 122-8; Sawyer, 1967, 145-72; Lijphart, 1992, 53.) Jahn says that "no small state had to go down due to its economic bankruptcy. Is Western Europe really so unhappy that there are Monaco, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Denmark, that Belgium split from Holland, Ireland from England, Norway from Sweden, Finland from Russia, Austria from Germany?" (Jahn, 1992, 50.)

⁵ It is not difficult to notice that the EU emerged on the territories of the world's oldest nations.

⁶ There are exceptions to this rule. The new states Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia and Kazakhstan are nationally less homogeneous than the former federations which they seceded from. We might agree with Duchacek that international tensions become particularly dangerous when the borders of national communities do not coincide with the political borders (Duchacek, 1970, 288). This rule does not apply if an ethnic or national community is small or dispersed.

⁷ For Croatian nationalists, who have not given up on the division of Bosnia, Huntington's hypotheses serve as the ultimate argument. However, this is just wishful thinking.

Islam is based on social circumstances and not on the civilisational heritage. The divisions in global politics do not follow the line of Huntington's argument. Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan are US allies, while Muslim peoples war with each other (Iraq against Kuwait, Iraq against Iran, Iraq against the Kurds and the Shiites, Turkey against the Kurds).⁸

The conflicts resulting from national disputes may produce serious consequences (international conflicts, civil wars). Mass and planned murders, like the ones in Rwanda and Bosnia, are an effort at ethnic cleansing of certain regions.⁹ Today, about twenty million refugees live outside their countries.

The possibility of non-conflict accommodation of national and ethnic rights paves the way for another approach to this issue. National equality and protection of minorities have recently become a component of the new understanding of democracy. Democracy cannot be limited to the majoritarian approach which suits dominant nations, but must include the institutions of the protection of minority rights as well as a certain degree of autonomy for everyone.¹⁰ National equality and the protection of minorities characterises contemporary democracies.¹¹

Very often, the foes of nationalism strive to denounce each and every discussion on national interests as unhealthy nationalism and declare that the struggle for national interests must be left to nationalists since they, so they say, cannot compete with them in the advocacy of national interests. This only strengthens extremist nationalism. However, at the time of a real threat for national interests (e.g. outside aggression), such a position is equal to political disaster. Also, this means that there will be no questions into whether the nationalist policies have appropriately and adequately identified and defended national interests. And this is exactly what all this is about. History teaches us

⁸ The war in the former Yugoslavia for Huntington is an ethnic war. He does not perceive Serbian president Milošević as the chief trouble maker. For Huntington, the most important thing is that the Croatian government launched an assault on the Serbs in Croatia, the Bosnian government did the same in relation to the Serbs and the Croats in their republic, while the fact that the Serbian government promoted 'the Greater Serbia' is only of secondary importance to him. His claim is that the major role in the war in this region was played by the thousands of volunteers from the West in the Croatian army, mujahedins in the Bosnian and the Russians in the Serbian army. Huntington's arguments support the Croatian extremists' claims about the need for the division of Bosnia, but in all other aspects it might be said that he supports the fundamental allegations of the Serbian nationalism, the fact which has obviously been overlooked by the Croatian popularizers of Huntington (Huntington, 1993, 25, 49; Huntington, 1996, 14-39, 272-91).

⁹ In comparison to the post-communist countries, the nationalisms of older nations were not less violent, says Jahn (Jahn, 1992, 50).

¹⁰ Cf. Kellas, 1991, 168.

¹¹ (Gurr, 1995, p. VIII). Kellas says that the parties that lean more to democratic solutions respond more sensibly to the minority nations' demands. He uses the example of Spain after Franco to show that democratisation and devolution were two facets of the same process. (Kellas, 1991, 94.) In communist countries, too, all the attempts at democratic reforms were accompanied by decentralisation and increasing autonomy of national communities, while the hard-core communist regimes had least understanding for other nationalities, and a history of forced assimilation, mass displacements and government terror (e.g. Stalin, Bulgaria during Todor Zhivkov or Milošević's Serbia).

that nationalistic approach, due to its underlying one-sidedness frequently has fatal consequences for the nation whose interests it ostensibly represents.¹²

Nationalist extremism cannot be mitigated by ignoring the nationality issue or by integrations which are not legitimated by equality. That is why in Croatia it has not been possible to criticise Croatian nationalism from the point of view of integrative Yugoslav unitarianism, since it either refused the discourse on the nationality issue or marginalised the problem naively thinking that it would somehow disappear. Politically, Yugoslav unitarianism supported the nationalism of the biggest, Serbian nation, by turning a blind eye to it. In this way it gave wings to the expansionism of the Greater Serbian project with all its negative consequences.¹³

There are nationalist movements that defend historically positive goals. Among these are by all means anti-colonial movements (unabashedly termed nationalist in colonial capitals), although the negative variants of nationalism had been rampant in these very capitals.¹⁴ For nationalist movements it is essential they have the nationality issue in focus.

Hugh Seton-Watson says that there are two incorrect approaches to nationalism. The first claims that other nationalisms were linked with mistakes and crimes, while their own nationalism is noble and different. The second rejects all nationalist movements as sheer evil. Seton-Watson thinks that many of these enemies of nationalism are full of subconscious nationalist prejudices and that an *a priori* rejection of national awareness is a sign of political disease. He concludes that there are two opposing truths. The first is that the nationalists who have decided to establish their own state, as well as the nationalists who have decided to impose their nationality or authority on others, are capable of terrible wars of attrition. The second truth lies in the fact that once created, nations are indestructible. The survival of civilisation hangs on the recognition of both truths (Seton-Watson, 1980, 429-30, 442-4).

In the post-communist transitional countries it is necessary first of all to define the key concepts. This is not only a matter of different ideological approach. The difference between the liberal and the Marxist approach in defining the national concept is not that

¹² The end result of nazism was calamitous for Germany: Germany was divided, while twelve million Germans from the neighbouring countries were expelled. The existing Serbian nationalism has not realised the idea of the Greater Serbia. The Serbs are still emigrating from Kosovo (the final conflict and the exodus are still to come). Today, the number of Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is approximately fifty per cent smaller than before the last war, while life in Serbia in the last few decades has never been so bad as today.

¹³ Integrative movements can be nationalist, even extremely nationalistically intoned, and with much more severe consequences. Colonial empires, from Britain and France to Russia, were insatiable and cruel in their expansionism. It is often forgotten that on the territory of the former Yugoslavia there were not only the Croatian, Serbian and other nationalisms of respective nations, but that Yugoslav unitarianism was a nationalist project, since its main political goal was outlined exclusively by the co-ordinates of the nationality issue.

¹⁴ Nationalism was rampant even among the leftist parties. The French socialists, together with the British conservatives waged a colonial war against Egypt in 1956.

big; it is due more to the difference between the definitions of this concept in the western and eastern-European tradition and the emphasis on different elements.

Concepts' Definitions

Nation

Ernest Renan defined the nation in 1882 (Renan, 1981, 89-106), as a distinctive historical consciousness whose grounds are to be found in the common past and the will to live together in the present. Ethnic origin, language, religion, and territory need not be a decisive factor. Although aware of the perspective of future integrations, his opinion is that the existence of nations is necessary as a "guarantee of freedom that would be lost if the world knew only one law and the sole master." (Renan, 1981, 105; Hutchinson, 1994, 15-8)

Max Weber underlined the political dimension of the national phenomenon. The concept of the nation is not empirically definable. National identity flows from the feeling of solidarity in relation to other groups and national solidarity from the memory of a common political fate. The national feeling is definable only in relation to the "inclination towards the one autonomous state." (Weber, 1994, 21-5.)

Otto Bauer (1881-1938)¹⁵, an Austro-Marxist and a social democrat, saw the solution of the nationality issue in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in cultural autonomy or federalisation.¹⁶ Nevertheless, under pressure of the national movements of non-Germanic peoples, Austrian social democrats opted for a federation in 1899, and at the end of World War I they reconciled themselves with the aspirations of non-Germanic peoples towards independence.¹⁷

For Bauer, certain characteristics make up the nation only in the context of interdependence. The essential element is common history. In various nations, these elements occur in various combinations. He cites the examples of Croats and Serbs, where different religions created two nations, while Germans remained one people despite their religious divisions. According to Bauer, the nation emerged from the community of origins and the community of cultures. The language is a distinctive feature of a na-

¹⁵ His major work is *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*. Beč, 1907.

¹⁶ The idea of cultural autonomy should have given to the non-German nations autonomy in the cultural sphere. This project enraged Lenin, which was why communists later refused cultural autonomy on principle even when it might have been a satisfactory solution for minority groups.

¹⁷ After the war, Bauer advocated the unification of Austria and Germany. The 1919 Peace Accord banned and prohibited this unification. Later still, faced with the threat of a violent annexation of Austria to Hitler's Germany, he spoke in defence of Austrian independence. As a matter of fact, Bauer always defended socialist positions that preferred big economic units as the basis of progress. In this way he countered the competition of nationalist movements (Bottomore, 1978, 30-3).

tion only if it produces the community of culture.¹⁸ He defines the nation as the totality of peoples, united by a common fate. (Bauer, 1983, 99-116; Davis, 1973, 149-50, 158 and 163).¹⁹

Within the communist movement, the longest-abiding definition of the nation was Stalin's eclectic one: "The nation is a historically formed stable community of people based on the community of language, territory, economic life, and character, which is manifested in the community of culture."²⁰ For Stalin, only all these elements make up a nation.²¹ Stalin did not grasp that the nation is a political phenomenon expressing political interests of a community. Besides, in his definition Stalin does not mention the level of economic development, a prerequisite for the formation of nations. For Stalin, nations were a subject of political manipulation.²²

Although he rightfully criticised Stalin's definition, Kardelj (a Slovenian) in fact built on it, only with an adage that nations emerge together with capitalist production.²³ "Thus, a nation is a specific people's community, which resulted from the social division of labour in capitalism or at its level of the development of the means of production when the quantity of the surplus of social labour began to be transformed into a new quality of the social integration on a higher level i.e. on a compact national territory, or within the framework of a common language and close ethnic and cultural similarity in general." (Kardelj, 1967, 28) The nation is again defined only as the totality of the mentioned elements. Kardelj, like Stalin, does not mention the political interest of a nation as a decisive consideration.

¹⁸ In that sense, Bauer thinks that the language of Croats and Serbs paved the way for one (common) nation. But, though Bauer emphasised the decisive role of the criterion of the community of culture and the community of fate, Croats and Serbs did not become one nation, despite several successive attempts to impose this via political unitarianism and toning down linguistic differences, since the process of nation-building for Croats and Serbs had gone too far to be reversed.

¹⁹ In his book on the phenomenon of the nation, Anderson comments on the insensitivity of the Austrian social democrats of that time regarding the national aspirations of the non-Germanic section of the dual monarchy, which paralleled the policy of the court in Vienna and which earned them the moniker "court socialists". (Anderson, 1990, 100)

²⁰ (Stalin, 1946, 296). The text is based on the article which Stalin wrote on Lenin's demand in 1913 as his contribution to the debate against the Bund, a Jewish socialist movement, and its aim was to prove that Jews are not a nation.

²¹ (Stalin, 1946, 297) Because, due to the absence of common elements (economy, territory and language), he did not consider the Jews in diaspora to be a nation.

²² Stalin's policy meant not only the discrimination of many nations but forced displacement and the elimination and reshaping of national units of several nations within the Soviet federation.

²³ Kardelj particularly successfully showed the meaninglessness of Stalin's concept of zonal languages as a path to nation-building. Stalin envisaged that the creation of zonal languages would lead to the creation of a global language (of course, Russian would have been the zonal language of the Slavs). Judging by the example of the former Yugoslavia, Kardelj concludes that a coercive "linkage" of languages only provokes more nationalist confrontations (Kardelj, 1980, 327-37).

In western political science, many authors emphasised certain important considerations defining aspects of the national phenomenon. Karl Deutsch explains nations and nationalism by the development of the communications in the modernisation process, which enables us to experience history as a common history (Deutsch, 1966, 96, 188; Hutchinson, 1994, 15, 26; Kellas, 1991, 39). Hechter shows that, in case of the inequality among a country's regions, the result of the modernisation may be internal colonialism in which the central region becomes dominant, while the peripheral regions become inferior (Hechter, 1975). Norwegian political scientist Stein Rokkan warns that the relation between the centre and the periphery becomes a potential source of territorial conflicts and nationalism when there is no harmony among cultural, economic, and political roles (Rokkan, 1982; 1983).

Benedict Anderson's starting point is the objective modernity of nations. The nation for him is an "imagined political community" (because in this community all its members cannot intercommunicate and are not the same). He agrees with Gellner that "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-awareness" since he "invents nations where there are none." (Anderson, 1990, 16-8). The origins of nations he finds in religious communities and dynastic monarchies, in the creation of the printed (standardised) languages during the early expansion of capitalism. The most important feature of a language is its capacity to "generate imagined communities so that in fact it builds specific solidarities."²⁴ He also considers the emergence of national languages as a democratisation, since the invitation to the masses to take part in history had to be written in – for them – an understandable language (Anderson, 1990, 77). Anderson, however, does not admit that the national consciousness is based not only on the imagined interests of social groups but also on the actual ones.

That is why the American political scientist Walker Connor will, when speaking of nationality, point out that "...what ultimately matters is not *what is*, but what people *believe is*." (Hutchinson, 1994, 37). A nation is an ethnic group aware of its distinctiveness. For Connor, the nation is a self-defining group.²⁵

Hugh Seton-Watson is also a proponent of the self-defining hypothesis: "... a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community deem they constitute a nation, or behave as if they constituted it." (Seton-Watson, 1980, 29). A nation is a community united through a feeling of solidarity, although various factors may play a part in the process of nation-building (in each country with different focus). In this process, Seton-Watson distinguishes between the old and the new nations. The old nations (the English, the French, the Scots, the Dutch, the Castilians, the Portuguese, the Danes, the Swedes, the Hungarians, the Poles, and the Russians) were formed prior to the appearance of the nationalist doctrine. With new nations, national consciousness and national

²⁴ (Anderson, 1990, 121) His hypothesis about the standardisation of the language and the role of this process in nation-building is corroborated by the example of Croats, Serbs, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Finns and Norwegians (71-2).

²⁵ The perception of others here is not important. Both the Croatian and the Serbian nationalists think that Bosnians (Bosniac Muslims) are an invented nation (implying they were originally Croats or Serbs). But, the proofs of the common ethnic origins of Bosnians are of a very small significance in comparison with the real political interests of a group that deems itself a nation.

movements appeared simultaneously and the language was the key factor in the creation of these nations²⁶. Their nationalism was much more fierce than that of the old nations.²⁷

Ernest Gellner considered the emergence of nations and nationalisms inevitable side-effects of modernisation and industrialism.²⁸ The emergence of the nation-state was necessary since the medieval state had not been able – due to a lack of centralised authority – to take up the tasks of industrialisation. Where there is no nation-state and where the principle ‘one nation, one culture’ has not been realised, there we can find nationalist activity. A prerequisite for the nation is a universal higher culture and centralised, and state-organised education.²⁹ Belonging to a nation implies a common culture and the subjective feeling that one belongs to this nation (Gellner, 1983, 5-7). Although he stresses the primacy of economic conditions, Gellner differs from Marx in that he does not see the future without nationalism, while Marx thinks that the creation of the new society will make nations superfluous (Gellner, 1983, 121).

Anthony D. Smith accepts the modernity of nationalisms, but also points out the continuity between the ethnic and the national. Smith warns that the process of nation-building is not identical only with the process of nation-building but also includes fostering common memory and historical tradition, shaping common culture, creating authentic distinctive values, demarcating the historical territory, defining the rights and the duties of the members of communities (Smith, 1995, 89-90). In the old nations, the central role belonged to the modernisation of administration, economy (market economy), culture, education (secular schools), and particularly the state which created the nation (Smith, 1991, 59-60). The role of religion was also crucial. Smith lists the examples of its significant role in the process of nation-building concerning the Catholic and Protestant groups in Northern Ireland, Croats and Serbs, Maronite Christians, Sikhs, Iranian Shiites.³⁰

Smith distinguishes the western and the eastern model of nation-building. The western model was characterised by a clearly defined territory with unique political institutions and jurisdiction, and by a common culture and ideology. The typical east-

²⁶ The distinctive role of the language is important in the nation-building process, but nationalists usually do not acknowledge the fact that after a sovereign nation-state has been formed, the efforts to spice the language with as many distinctive features as possible is no longer politically important. On the contrary, subsequent devising of differences as in the case of Croatian nationalists, does not reflect the dramatics of nation-building but turns into a farce.

²⁷ Seton-Watson considers the distinction between the old and the new nations more important than distinguishing between the historical and the unhistorical peoples. Historical peoples are those who have had their own state and have been the creators and the subjects of history.

²⁸ Cf. Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1983.

²⁹ Cf. Gellner, 1983, 34; Bogdanor, 1991, 316.

³⁰ (Smith, 1995, 88; Smith, 1991, 6-8). Here we might add that the nationalistic Croatian and Serbian objections that Bosnians (formerly Bosniac Muslims) cannot be a nation because they are defined solely by their religion (and that it is a unique case) do not hold water, since many other nations have been defined or empowered by religion.

European model (valid for Asia too) is the ethnic concept of the nation, based on the ethnic origins (that include the language and the tradition) (Smith, 1991, 9-13). The borders of dynastic empires in the European west were more clearly outlined while, due to the belatedness and vagueness of ethnic borders in the east of the Continent, the emphasis there was instead on the state (only a prospect to be eventually realised) and on ethnic ties. Contrary to Smith, we think that this is in essence the same process at work here, only with a time lag. Furthermore, some nations in the east were modelled after the western model (e.g. the Russian), while some nations in the west were seriously falling behind (not only the Irish and the Austrian).³¹ Smith thinks that it is nevertheless possible to define the common features of national identity for both models: historical territory, common memory, mass culture, legislation and economy (Smith, 1991, 14-5). According to Smith, nations are conceptually mixtures of two sets of dimensions: civil-territorial and ethno-genealogical (Smith, 1991, 15, 44).

James G. Kellas links the emergence of the nation with the centralisation of the state, industrialisation, economic and cultural changes, the appearance of democracy. For him, the objective characteristics of the nation include origin, history, culture, religion, territory, language, while the subjective include people's awareness of their nationality. The share of these elements is not uniform; the political fate of a nation is essentially determined by the perception of its members (Kellas, 1991, 2-3, 164, 163).

This whole review might lead one to think that the advent of nations has its objective and subjective presumptions, that in the last instance it is about the feeling of the existence of common interest and that this interest is defined as a political goal (from interest protection to the establishment of the nation-state). Also, the nation is undoubtedly a historical category, linked with modernisation. The integration of a nation into a nation-state is the end of the process with which a community turns into a nation (nation-building) (Bogdanor, 1991, 379-80).

Most often, the nation is built on the common (real or perceived) ethnic origin.³² However, what essentially distinguishes a nation from an ethnic group is its political dimension, which is most obvious in a national political movement or entity (nation-state, as a rule).

Nation-State

A nation-state is a "territorial-political unit (a state) whose borders coincided or nearly coincided with the territorial distribution of a national group. More concisely, the

³¹ The Austrian Constitutional Assembly of 1919, with only one vote against, passed the Constitution which envisaged the unification with Germany. The victorious powers banned the unification (Linz, 1996, 21). Apart from the Austrian nation, the recent national profiling of the Walloons and the Flemish in Belgium on the basis of their respective linguistic and ethnic communities is an example of lagging in the west (Teich, 1994, 143).

³² There is a possibility of nation-formation without relying on the original ethnic community (USA, Australia, Latin America).

concept described a situation in which a nation had its own state³³ or a state that legitimises itself as an expression of national will and national identity (Smith, 1991, 168-9). A nation-state is a homeland (identified by one political system) of the people who identify themselves as a nation (Robertson, 1993, 332). In nation-states there is the coincidence (not identicalness) of the nation and the state.³⁴ Very often, the term nation-state is used indiscriminately for all states in general.³⁵ Also, it is often inappropriately used for referring to nationally homogeneous states.

Nation-states with totally nationally homogeneous population are very few. It is no coincidence that many who claim this title are islands. In his analysis of 132 recognised states as of 1971, Connor shows that: (1) only twelve states (9.1%) were “genuine” nation-states; (2) twenty-five states (18.9%) had a dominant nation that included more than 90% of the population; (3) twenty-five states (18.9%) had a dominant nation that included between 75 and 89% of the population; (4) in 31 states (23.5%), the biggest ethnic community represented between 54 and 74% of the population; (5) in 39 states (29.5%), the biggest nation made up less than half of the population.³⁶

Of course, modern states are as a rule states representative of the community of citizens (“civil state”) and at the same time an expression of a particular national identity (“nation-states”). Since there are both aggressive and peaceful ethnic nationalisms (e.g. Catalanian and Czech), there is also a likelihood of not only tolerant and democratic, but also intolerant, repressive and biased civic nationalism (e. g. the former attitude of European states towards their Jews or partly their today’s attitude towards immigrants). Thus it could be said that nation-states can be democratic and nationally tolerant, just as they need not be (Smith, 1995, 98-105). The nation-state is not only desirable as a guarantee of the defensive potentials of a nation in case of external threats, but is also functional regarding the modern industrial economy. The avoidance of conflicts (the emer-

³³ Connor, Walker. A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a... Hutchinson, 1994, 39.

³⁴ Renner, Karl. The Development of the National Idea (Bottomore, 1978, 123). “The nation-state is the state idea of rising capitalism; the basis of the state is not the economic region, but the region of national settlement. Historically this idea bears the name ‘the principle of nationality’; it claims that ‘every nation should form one state, and every state should embrace only one nation’. In this dual form, the concept of the nation became the decisive political idea of European bourgeois democracy (Mazzini) in the mid-nineteenth century.” Renner, *ibid.* (Bottomore, 1978, 118-9).

³⁵ “Where *nation* and *state* coincide... the two are indistinguishably merged in popular perception. The state is perceived as the political extension of the nation...” That is why the notions of nation and state are often inappropriately used: the United Nations, The International Monetary Fund, international law, international organizations, national income, national product, national wealth, national interest, transnationality, nationalisation (Connor, *ibid.* Hutchinson, 1994, 39-40).

³⁶ Connor, *ibid.* Hutchinson, 1994, 39. Hannum will also say that there are few, if any, nationally homogeneous nation-states in the world, and warns that striving for homogeneity may lead to repression and the violation of human rights (Hannum, 1996, 26). Smith’s definition requires that the borders of the state and the nation coincide (Smith, 1995, 86).

gence of nation-states undoubtedly triggered them off) cannot be achieved by disclaiming nation-states or by turning them into multi-national states.³⁷

The concept of the nation-state as a rule has only a declaratory value. In democratic states, it does not offer any special rights to the people whose expression of national identity the state represents. Special rights are provided only within a federation or by constitutionally guaranteed autonomies since in that case, constitutional relations cannot be changed without the agreement of the component parts of the federation or the proponents of other rights guaranteed by the constitution or international institutions. The federal units can be considered nation-states. The related literature holds that the constituent units of the Yugoslav federation were “explicitly designed to be distinctive nation-states.”³⁸

Nationalism

Nationalism as a phenomenon contains, first, a political platform and, second, a movement or a party with such a programme.³⁹ Gellner thinks that nationalism is a political principle and claims that political and national units should coincide.⁴⁰ For Smith, nationalism is “... an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy,

³⁷ Cf. Linz, 1996, 17, 19-20; Kellas, 1991, 3, 61; Smith, 1995, 111. The potential danger is corroborated by the fact that in the course of the process of nation-building in Europe up to 1900, the number of political entities had to be reduced from 1,500 to 25.

³⁸ Forsyth, 1989, 5. The statement that Croatia is a state of the Serbian people in Croatia (together with the statement that Croatia is the nation-state of the Croatian people) in the normative section of the earlier Constitution of the communist Croatia, was interpreted by Serbian political representatives as an expression of the constitutive position of the Serbian people in Croatia. However, the constitutional solutions of the then Croatia did not contain any elements that would be conducive to such constitutiveness in the organization of the state (apart from the consulting parliamentary committee for inter-ethnic relations). The intention of the Constitution was apparent: to emphasise the special status of the Serbs in Croatia and set them apart from other minorities. Obviously, the formulation about the Serbs in Croatia could, as well as the definition of the nation-state, have only declarative character. The 1990 Constitution of the independent Croatia moved the formulation about the Croatian nation-state into the preamble, while the Serbs were mentioned as first among the members of “other nations and minorities”. The change was made, but it can hardly be declared a *casus belli*. (Cf.: ZAVNOH, collection of documents. Zagreb, Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta, 1964; The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, Article 1; The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia 1990, Historical provisions). We should stop here to note that during the communist regime in Croatia, there used to be a constitutional practice that some of the highest government posts (president of the Presidency, president of the Parliament, prime minister, president of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, of trade unions, and so on) were held by the Serbs. However, this practice, that had guaranteed some genuine equality, was not mentioned in the debate on the constitutiveness of the Serbian people in Croatia.

³⁹ This is a recent word which first appeared in 1789; Oxford English Dictionary first included it in 1844. The emergence of nationalism was recognised only at the end of the 18th century; the word came into a wider use only in the 20th ct. Many authors agree that nationalism begins with the French revolution. (Cf.: Friedrich, 1968, 34; Hobsbawm, 1993, 113; Smith, 1991, 72).

⁴⁰ Gellner, 1983, 1, 43. Blackwell's Encyclopedia claims that nationalism is a doctrine supportive of the thesis that the political and the national units should territorially coincide (Bogdanor, 1991, 382).

unity, and identity of a nation” (Smith, 1991, 73-74). According to Kellas, nationalism “defends and promotes a nation’s interests”, and occurs when the establishment of the nation-state is blocked.⁴¹

Very often, nationalism is used pejoratively. Anderson says that even Tom Nairn, the author who has a lot of sympathy for national movements thinks that “‘nationalism’ belongs into the pathology of modern evolutive history” (Anderson, 1990, 16-8). Seton-Watson thinks that nationalism is a pejorative concept, opposite to the word patriotism; that it is a policy harming others, ignoring the interests of other peoples; “a political movement whose purpose is to support the alleged interests of a nation”, and that its two most frequent goals are independence and national unity (Seton-Watson, 1980, 26). Nevertheless, Seton-Watson marks off the concept of extremist nationalism, characterised by fanatical hatred (Seton-Watson, 1980, 35).

Nationalism is often divided into two types, the western and the east-European model. The western model is civic/territorial, unifying, liberal, a nation’s citizens are members of the nation, and historically belongs into the 19th century. The east-European model is ethno-genealogical, Balkan-like in its methods, with coercive engineering (exchanges of populations, evictions, forced assimilations, liquidations, brutality), promotes particularism, destroys, requires ethnic identity as the basis for citizenship, is historically belated, typical for unhistorical nations (Smith, 1991, 81; Gellner, 1983, 99-100; Kellas, 1991, 73-4; Bogdanor, 1995, 85-6). Renner adds that in these nations, national dispossession was a barrier for spreading socialist ideas (Bottomore, 1978, 120).

It is true that in today’s western democracies the national tensions are much smaller than in eastern Europe or in the Third World. In the west, ethnic boundaries were indisputable, and centralised states strong at the time of nation-building, which made the process easier. However, even then this process was detrimental for weaker ethnic communities that used to be assimilated by hook or by crook. The dimensions of their dispossession are hard to estimate since the democratic standards of that time were much lower than today and the availability of the information is incomparably smaller. The traces of that former discrimination are still visible in the consequent national and regional aspirations that appear even within the fold of the oldest nation-states. In the east, the nation-building process took place in a region which is much more difficult to define ethnically, hand in hand with constant changes of state entities and their borders and with a time-lag of a century or two. Today, democratic standards are much stricter, and the abuse of the rights of the members of weaker ethnic communities, unluckily for the new breed of recent nationalists, can no longer be tolerated. At the same time, in the west there have also been some instances of the belated nation-building (e.g. in Ireland, Austria) and, most recently, the ethnically restrictive laws on citizenship; also, the western model has been applied in the east (Czech Republic, Hungary).⁴²

⁴¹ Kellas, 1991, 3-61. Nationalism is defined also as a political doctrine that requires a community to live in one political system which defends the equality of the community and insists that the community ought to be independent (Robertson, 1993, 333).

⁴² Most states prefer their citizens to be members of a homogeneous nation, which is usually reflected in their immigration laws (Kellas, 1991, 150-1; Smith, 1991, 81).

Nationalism still provokes conflicts. Conflicts are realistic if they are in line with rational interests. But international disputes are hugely affected by psychological stresses and particularly by the feeling of insecurity (Kellas, 1991, 162). Nationalism's ideological opposites are liberalism and Marxism, both of which, each for its own reasons, advocated wider integrations opposite to particularism and often demonstrated little sympathy for nationality issues. Marxist political movements, when not so dogmatic, were more sensitive to the national phenomenon, though only within the instrumentalised approach (e.g. Lenin vs Stalin), while liberal democracy only recently proved that it is capable of facing the complexity of the topic (the example of Belgium, European regionalism, and alike).⁴³ A political response (also at the level of institutions) to nationalism is sought in the conciliation of conflicting interests (via federalism, autonomy, protection of minorities and human rights, multiculturalism, and consociational democracy). In late industrial and post-industrial society, nationalism is less virulent: borders have been stabilised, democratic standards and the protection of minorities greatly improved.

In spite of all this, nationalism still precipitates controversial reactions, since every nationalism contains potential for a conflict.⁴⁴ Nationalism cannot be avoided, particularly not by ignoring or appeals. If we define nationalism as a political movement for which the nationality issue is central (as an exclusive or primary political goal), to define the national interest and the instruments of implementation means to divulge the positive or the negative connotations of a particular nationalism. The typical goals of nationalist movements are nation-building (including the establishment of nation-states), the fight against discrimination, national integration within the borders of the nation-state, aggressive and defensive wars. It is not difficult to see that there is a big difference among the liberation wars, defensive wars and aggressions.

⁴³ Hobsbawm points out that at first many socialist parties were chief proponents of national movements (in Poland, Finland, Georgia, Armenia, Holland, Scotland, Wales). The combination of the social and the national programme characterised HSS /the Peasants' Party/ in Croatia from 1918 to 1941. The dominant discourse of national emancipation up to the 1970s was reflected in the theory of the left. The alternative and extremely nationally-intoned discourse was also discredited by its ties with nazism (Hobsbawm, 1993, 136-7, 163). This has led many to wrongly conclude that every actualisation of nationality issues is typical for the rightist approaches. However, Lenin and Tito, for example, included some national elements in their political platforms as major components of their strategy.

⁴⁴ Gellner lists four typical mistaken theories on nationalism: (1) nationalism as a natural phenomenon; (2) nationalism as an artificial idea (unnecessary historical incident); (3) nationalism as a historical mistake (Marxism - a message to the working class by mistake delivered to the nation); (4) nationalism as a restoration of the atavistic forces of blood and land (though prior periods were not any better). The problem with nationalism is, Gellner concludes, that it is inherent to a certain set of social conditions, with these conditions being "the conditions of our time" (Gellner, 1983, 125, 129-30).

Accommodation of Interests

Protection of Minorities

Besides civil and inter-state wars, there is a set of modalities for solving national conflicts. Some of these methods are very crude. Internal elimination includes genocide, displacement (exchange) of the populations, forced assimilation. Typical examples are the extermination of Armenians at the hands of the Turks in 1915-16⁴⁵ and the holocaust⁴⁶, but so are the atrocities committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia in the recent war.⁴⁷ After World War I, Greece and Turkey agreed on the exchange of the populations. In practice, however, this was but an inhumane persecution of people; “exchanges” cannot be defended on the grounds that they are more humane than mass killings.⁴⁸ After World War II, at the Potsdam Conference, the Allies okayed the plan to evict the Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia and the former Yugoslavia; the plan was carried out and twelve million Germans were banished.⁴⁹ There was a plan for banishing the Hungarians from the former Yugoslavia, but the Hungarian communist leaders managed to prevent this by intervening with Stalin. The forced assimilation must be distinguished from the spontaneous assimilation; the American melting pot is a case that belongs into a league of its own.⁵⁰

A separate problem is the protection of national minorities. Minorities are numerically smaller non-dominant groups in a state, distinctive in their ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic characteristics. These are groups with a sense of solidarity and the desire to survive as a separate community, to preserve their culture, tradition, language, and to achieve true equality. Minorities are also defined as distinctive groups with a permanent feeling of being discriminated against or as groups dominated by others (Halperin, 1992, 54; Hannum, 1996, 50, 60-1; Duchacek, 1970, 96). Minorities usually have characteristic political and economic difficulties in their access to the positions of power or public services, with their right of vote, their serving in the army or the police, with

⁴⁵ According to the Turkish sources, the number of Armenian victims did not exceed 200,000; the Armenians, on the other hand, put their estimate at up to a million and a half.

⁴⁶ It is estimated that the number of murdered people within Hitler’s plan Judenrein (“Jew-cleansed”) or “the final solution” is six million European Jews (Krieger, 1993, 396).

⁴⁷ The number of deaths is estimated to be about 200,000.

⁴⁸ However, Lijphart cites the hypotheses by Louis Wirth and Norman J. G. Pounds on the exchange of populations as a lesser evil than the proliferation of small states and violent conflicts (Lijphart, 1992, 52). Nationalists on the territory of the former Yugoslavia found the idea of the population exchange particularly appealing. It was implemented in the recent war (and is still being implemented) in the form of ethnic cleansing (euphemism for genocide).

⁴⁹ The first to banish Germans from Alsace were the Jacobins in 1789.

⁵⁰ Immigrants of varied ethnic origins arrived to America not as ethnic groups but as individuals who created the American nation. The opinions that this process might be repeated in the region with clearly formed national communities are completely absurd. In the former Yugoslavia such idea was close to the heart of the partisans of Yugoslav unitarianism.

their genuine possibilities for political organising, the realisation of the right to legal protection, equal pay for equal work, the rights to property (particularly over land), the access to educational institutions, the possibilities of commercial activities, entering free professions or public services. The findings of Gurr's project "Minorities in Danger" show that (1) intentional discrimination by the dominant group is a much more important source of the minority issue than the cultural differences between the minorities and the majority; (2) that economic inequalities are much more resistant to changes than political inequalities; and (3) that since the 1950s, minorities have increasingly rebelled.⁵¹ There are also mathematical majorities but with the minority status (the coloured population of South Africa and Rhodesia), and minorities with the dominant majority status (Tutsi in Rwanda in 1971, white people in South Africa and Rhodesia, Sunni Arabs in Iraq).⁵² Minorities may be quite large. There are between 18 and 20 million Kurds, but in several states (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, on Caucasus).⁵³ In China, minorities make up 6.7% of the population, but occupy more than 50% of the entire territory (1985) (Hannum, 1996, 67).

The protection of minority rights cannot be reduced to democracy and the protection of individual rights. Democratic countries are more tolerant towards their minorities, but democracy means nothing if minorities are permanently outvoted, which happens to them as a rule, since in the majoritarian decision-making they cannot gain more votes than the majority. Similar is the fate of civilisationally substandard indigenous populations (Halperin, 1992, 65). That is why the thesis about reducing minority rights to the protection of their individual civil rights is hypocrisy. This is nothing but a disguise for majorities' nationalism.⁵⁴

Since the 17th century, when religious rights of communities were recognised, from the Ottoman millet system with religious communities' autonomy, to the system of minority agreements after World War One under the auspices of the League of Nations, there is the thin red line of the protection of minorities as groups. For example, the 1926 Lebanese Constitution protects the seven religious groups, similar to the Ottoman millet system. It was only the Anglophone immigrant countries such as USA, Australia, and Canada that introduced the individualist orientation, which was later adopted by the OUN. US influence in the OUN after World War II imposed the protection of individual rights as the main policy in the protection of minorities. In the practice of the United States (and other immigrant countries) this had a sense as a method of the assimilation of immigrants and of nation-building. However, in the mid-eighties, a dilemma regarding an alternative to this surfaced in the UN agencies: individual or collective minority protection. The document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

⁵¹ Gurr, 1995, VII-VIII, 40-1.

⁵² Gurr includes into this group Serbs in the former Yugoslavia (Gurr, 1995, 8).

⁵³ Cf.: Krieger, 1993, 518.

⁵⁴ In the former Yugoslavia, the complaints of smaller nations in the federation that they were perennially outvoted surprised the Serbian side; Serbian politicians stubbornly claimed that the liberal principle 'one man, one vote' is the only democratic way. When the Serbs became minorities in the new states (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Serbian politicians immediately ceased mentioning that liberal principle.

(Copenhagen 1990) concludes that a minority as a whole must enjoy certain political rights. In line with this, the Council of Europe in 1991 gave the initiative for the protection of the existence of minority groups, their cultural identity, education in their mother tongue, participation in public sector and demanded refraining from unforced assimilation as well (Halperin, 1992, 54-9; Hannum, 1996, 50-60, 63-7).

The protection of minorities as collectives is necessary since minority members are not subjected to discrimination as individuals but just because they are members of a minority. They are not endangered in their rights as individuals, but as a group. That is why it is meaningless to reduce their protection to the protection of their individual rights, because this will not suffice to protect them from the discrimination directed towards them as a collective. Duchacek thinks that the protection of a minority as a group is necessary, first, to preserve the identity of a group; second, because it is a guarantee of individual rights as well; and third, because a majority can always obstruct the individual rights of minorities. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan criticise the unyielding followers of political liberalism, the acolytes of individual rights and universalism, who object to any form of collective minority rights. They believe that the “combination of collective rights of nationalities or minorities within a multinational, multicultural society or state, and the individual rights fully protected by the state, is probably... the least conflictual path” of the articulation of a democratic policy regarding minority protection (Duchacek, 1970, 98-9; Linz, 1996, 33-4). People are organised in societies and very few rights can be imagined in an entirely individual context. But the reverse is also true: the application of collective rights is genuine only if individuals are able to realise and protect their interests through them.

The protection of minorities usually includes education in the languages of minorities, the protection of their cultural institutions, customs, religion, financing their activities, possibilities of a certain degree of autonomy, special protection of their human rights (equal opportunities i. e. non-discriminating practices), positive discrimination (special privileges), reserved posts (a quota system in the leaderships of political parties and governmental bodies).⁵⁵

The application of various electoral models may benefit minorities or hinder their efforts to represent their interests. Proportional elections enable the representation of territorially dispersed minority members and territorially concentrated minority groups. Minority protection can be stepped up by using separate party lists as well as some other more complicated electoral systems.⁵⁶ An electoral model cannot turn a minority into a majority, but can make sure that a minority is represented and that its voice is heard (Bogdanor, 1995, 89-91). In general, parliamentary regimes benefit minorities, since they give rise to the coalitions in which ethnic parties can take part, but there are

⁵⁵ Finland recognises bilingual local communities if the minority population represents 8% of the population (and not lower than 6%). That policy was proposed as the key for the implementation of special rights of minorities in Croatia during the 1991-1995 war.

⁵⁶ This includes the elections in which voters have two votes so that both of them can be converged on the candidate of their own national group (cumulating), or the possibility of voting for candidates from various party lists (panaching), etc.

instruments to see to it that even in presidential elections the influence of different national communities is secured.⁵⁷

Minorities' status depends also on the general attitude of a minority towards the dominant nation and its nation-state. If a minority challenges the dominant nation's legitimate rights and a priori withholds loyalty to the common state, regardless of its democratic and tolerant or undemocratic and intolerant character, then the relations inevitably worsen and a search for peaceful solutions is made difficult. Very often, minorities look for support outside the state they live in, in their parent country and its state or insist on higher-level integrations (e. g. federations) as the sole bastion of their interests.⁵⁸ Such an attitude leads to irredentism and deepens the wariness of the majority nation in the higher-level integrations.⁵⁹ It is only natural that minorities turn for support to their parent country and seek security in integrations.⁶⁰ A much simpler attitude would be to insist on democratisation (and tolerance) of the common state as the basis of the protection of minority rights.⁶¹

The Right to Self-Determination

At the level of principles, the strongest instrument of the protection of national identity is the right of a nation to self-determination, which gives each people the right to determine for itself its political status, including the right to their own state. The concept of self-determination thus sets national interests as the highest principle of political legitimation. The principle includes the right of peoples to choose a form of government within a state, to redefine the borders, the right of a political unit within a federation to secede and create a new, independent state, the protection of minorities, the right of an ethnic group to a higher degree of cultural and political autonomy and the preservation and a more comprehensive protection of their own identity. Ultimately, the principle of self-determination provides a people with the right to choose to which political identity to give their loyalty (Connor as cited by Hannum, 1996, 7; Halperin, 1992, XI, 47).

⁵⁷ Multiethnic Nigeria has tried out this method in presidential elections with the condition that a candidate may be elected only if he/she gets 25% of the votes in two-thirds of the federal states (Linz, 1994, 44).

⁵⁸ All the three cases refer to the political behaviour of a bigger portion of the Serbian population in Croatia.

⁵⁹ Irredentism is a movement that tries to achieve the re-annexation of foreign territories into their state (the origin of the motto is *Italia irredenta* of the 19th century Italian political movement) or to annex a minority to its parent country. The French revanchism demanded the return of the lost Alsace and Lorraine, Hitler demanded that all Germans live in one country, Milošević that all Serbs live in one country (Robertson, 1993, 250; Hitler, 1973, 329, 393, 398, 423).

⁶⁰ It is extremely dangerous if the support of the parent country to its minority in another state turns into political meddling into the internal affairs of that state. Such intentions of Serbian nationalism in relation to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (and Croatian nationalism in relation to Bosnia) surfaced during the recent war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

⁶¹ The fact that the Finnish Swedes gave their support to the Finnish efforts to secede from Russia, provided them with a very high degree of protection of their minority rights in the independent Finnish state.

In modern political history, the principle of self-determination was promoted at the end of World War One by American president Wilson and the Bolshevik leader Lenin. Wilson's liberalism implied inseparability of individual and national freedom. It assumed that states would be identical to nations, and that every people would have its own state. Wilson's *realpolitik* approach was supposed to have fostered the decomposition of mostly hostile states in Europe (Austro-Hungary, Germany, the Ottoman empire and the Russian empire) and that is why its implementation did not go further than that. It was accepted in some peace accords that some of the successor states of the former multinational empires be mini-multinational states (Czechoslovakia, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) (Seton-Watson, 1980, 19, 25). On the other hand, and in line with the social democracy of his time, Lenin advocated the right of peoples to self-determination including secession, because the struggle of the oppressed peoples within the Russian empire supplied him with an ally in his revolutionary platform.⁶² However, Lenin's approach included remarkable shifts (from centralism to federalism), and it was limited in the scope of its realization. Lenin advocated the principle of self-determination at the state level, while opposing the federalisation of the Bolshevik Party. Also, he subjugated the realisation of self-determination to the interests of the victory of the communist revolution. Nevertheless, Lenin was probably among the most energetic partisans of national rights for all peoples, and an adversary of Russian nationalism, while in his interpretation of the nationality issue he was several steps ahead of a good part of the contemporary left-wingers, who claimed that his attitudes were a nationalist deviation. Typical of Lenin is the controversy raging between him and the radical leftists, who underestimated the role of the national phenomenon (as represented by Rosa Luxemburg⁶³), as well as between him and the advocates of the unitarian greater-Russian politics, represented by Stalin. Negativism, reductionism, disregard and instrumentalisation of the nationality issue have remained the fixture of the dogmatic left up to present time; Lenin, however, later in life came very near to accepting the role of the nationality issue as a separate, important, and unavoidable political issue and the national self-determination as a universal right.⁶⁴

Among the well-known successful implementations of the principle of self-determination are the Greek uprising against the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent independence achieved in 1830, Belgian secession from Holland in the same year, the termination of the personal union between Norway and Sweden in 1905, the peaceful

⁶² Seton-Watson says that already in the first Russian revolution of 1905, the nationality issue worked in favour of the rebellion and that the revolution was most fierce in the non-Russian regions (Seton-Watson, 1980, 101).

⁶³ Her opinions on the nationality issue stated in the foreword to Rosa Luxemburg's book *Izabrani spisi* (Zagreb, Naprijed, 1974) were with gusto embraced by a Belgrade philosopher Ljubomir Tadić, who has in the last several years uncritically defended the positions of Serbian nationalism and Milošević in the national controversies on the territory of the former Yugoslavia (pp. 19-20).

⁶⁴ Cf.: Lenin, 1958; Lenin, 1977; Liebman, 1980; Meyer, 1971; Lewin, 1978; Pipes, 1964; Nahaylo, 1990.

secession of Finland from Russia in 1918, the establishment of Swedish autonomy on the Åland Islands in Finland in 1920, the secession of Iceland from Denmark in 1944.⁶⁵

In some cases, constitutions of certain states included the right to self-determination including secession and thus this principle was incorporated in the constitutional regulation. The Constitution of Burma envisaged the secessionist procedure, all Soviet constitutions included the right of the republics to secession defined in the normative section of the text, while the last constitution of the second (Tito's) Yugoslavia spoke of the right to self-determination (including secession) in its preamble.⁶⁶ However, the right to self-determination is also a universal political principle and a rule of international public law and as such an obligation for all states in the world. The UN Charter also included the right to self-determination as a universal right (Article 1, 55). True, at the beginning, the implementation of that law was limited to colonial nations, but gradually its universalness became accepted. This is evidenced by the 1975 Final CESC Act which included among its principles the right to self-determination. This right may run counter to the right of states to integrity, but in practice this opposition between the two rights is usually resolved in favour of self-determination, if the state in question does not represent all its citizens (if it discriminates against any of the peoples who live within its borders). The right to self-determination may be abused if it serves as an alibi for aggression and destabilisation of the state against which this right wants to be used (e. g. Hitler's Germany and the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia in 1938 as a pretext for the annexation of the territory or the way it made use of its countrymen in Poland to launch the aggression against this country.⁶⁷) International law has not regulated the procedure of using the right to self-determination and this might present a political problem since violent solutions are very likely (Hannum, 1996, 506; Halperin, 1992, XI-XII, 4, 16, 20, 28-31; Ibler, 1992). Theory teaches us that a demand for self-determination cannot be so lightly ignored. Although in most cases the respect for individual rights and minority rights may be a satisfactory solution of the problem, in some

⁶⁵ (Seton-Watson, 1980, 81, 88-9, 124; Halperin, 1992, 19) In secession, the internal pluralism is transferred onto the international level. Secessions are possible within the same people (Switzerland and USA). The problem of secession lies in the creation of new minorities and new irredentism. Secessions and partitions are possible only when ethnic groups are territorially concentrated (Duchacek, 1970, 68-9, 80-1).

⁶⁶ Duchacek explicitly claims that the Soviet, Yugoslav, and Burmese constitutions gave to their federal units "the right to territorial self-determination and secession" (Duchacek, 1970, 217-21). In the debates that were going on in the late 1980s in the former Yugoslavia, Serbian political scientists and lawyers claimed that nowhere in the world was there a constitution that would mention self-determination, and that in the former Yugoslavia this right was "used by" by the act of joining the federation. Croatian and Slovenian experts, on the other hand, were trying to prove that the essence of this right is its normative abstractness which, as a rule, cannot imply that this right is 'disposable' and that such legal norms do not exist anywhere (Cf.: Pusić, 1991).

⁶⁷ A year before the attempt at secession by to so-called Krajina from the Republic of Croatia, the same scenario was used in the spring of 1989 in the debate about the discrimination of the Serbs in Croatia, at the time when the independent Croatian state did not exist and the alleged discrimination was not feasible due to the power-balance between the political elite in Croatia and the federation.

cases new states emerge despite all the risks. In these cases, in the interest of securing a peaceful process, international community must get involved early on.⁶⁸

Decentralization and Autonomy

Part of the tensions in international relations can be solved by means of a decentralisation of unitary states. Decentralisation implies relegating authority from the central government to lower levels; the central authorities decide which rights to relegate, and retain the right to revoke such decisions. The goal of decentralisation can be administrative efficacy or the amortisation of sub-national pressures (regional or ethno-regional). Delegating power may be symbolic and marginal but also momentous. In the latter case, in its content and effects it is similar to federalisation. The examples of decentralisation are Italy in its 1947 Constitution (minus the foot-dragging regarding the implementation of autonomy for most provinces), Spain after Franco, and Britain. In Great Britain the concept is known as devolution (Duchacek, 1970, 111-47; Punnett, 1994, 176-8, 435-43; Theen, 1996, 36-8; Sharpe, 1994, 192-208). Scotland had its own church and the legal system, as well as a parliamentary committee for Scottish legislature. In 1979, Labour government attempted a limited devolution of certain prerogatives of the central government to the Scottish and the Welsh assemblies, but this proposal did not get the qualified majority at the referendum in Scotland, and in Wales the proposal was rejected. Labour government of Tony Blair had prepared some proposals regarding the devolution which were accepted in 1997 at the referendums in Scotland and Wales. Scotland is to get its own parliament with executive powers. The parliament, to be elected in 1999, will be responsible for health care, education, local administration, social affairs, economic development and transport, partly for legal and interior affairs, and so on. Within limits, it will be able to decide on the taxes. The Welsh parliament will enjoy almost the same competences minus the right to decide on the taxes.⁶⁹

Federalism

Unitary states may represent a suitable solution for nationally homogeneous societies, but not for multinational countries. In these cases international problems can be resolved by creating multinational structures in the form of confederations and federations. The origin of confederations and federations is common.⁷⁰ A confederation is a

⁶⁸ (Halperin, 1992, 7). The last statement is obviously inspired by the belated intervention of international community in the war on the territories of Croatia and Bosnia. The former preemptive involvement in the defined procedure of self-determination could have prevented the outbreak of the war, material damages, victims and suffering.

⁶⁹ In essence, both cases are about broadening the existing competences of state secretaries for Scotland and Wales i.e. the offices for these two countries. (Scotland's Parliament, 1997; A Voice for Wales, 1997).

⁷⁰ Both words come from the Latin word *foedus*, which mean a pact, an alliance. The distinction between these two words in the Anglo-Saxon literature appeared in 1870 and is as old as the American Constitution of 1789. In Germany since 1815, lawyers distinguish between *Staatenbund* (union of states) and *Bundesstaat* (federal state). (Bogdanor, 1991, 129-30).

relatively looser union of sovereign and equal states of a permanent nature. As a rule, historical confederations have been created for defensive purposes. They relegated to this union some of the defensive and foreign policy competences. It is no coincidence that confederations turned into federations or collapsed. Occasionally, confederal forms served as a mode to alleviate the tensions at the time of a split from a federation.⁷¹ Today, confederations are the United Nations (1945), NATO (1949), the European Union in its early stages (since 1952), the Community of Independent States created on the territory of the former USSR with coordinative functions (1991).

Unlike confederations, federations represent states in which authority is constitutionally territorially divided between common agencies and agencies at the level of federal units. The sovereignty is divided between the common state and the member states of the federation, the citizens are subjects of both entities that may regulate their rights, a written constitution defines the division of authority, while the constitutional court mediates in the disputes about the competences of the central and the decentralised levels of government. In federations, as a rule, equal representation of unequal units in common agencies is the desired goal (particularly by means of two-tiered parliaments). A federation represents an institutionalised co-existence of differences based on the accommodation of constituent units of federal states in the decision-making constitutionally regulated procedure (Burgess, 1993, 4-5; Hague, 1992, 270, 272-3; Duchacek, 1970, 192, 194).⁷²

Federations have been established to conciliate or jointly solve problems of multinational societies, and/or to jointly protect from outside danger, and/or to establish the common market. Graham Smith, citing Wheare's classic work, sees the purpose of federations in the compromise between the need for difference and the achievement of a certain degree of unity (Wheare, 1963, 244-5; Smith, G. 1995, 301; Hague, 1992, 270-1).

Modern federation is American invention. The prototype was the union created in 1787 at the Philadelphia Convention. (Friedrich, 1968, 11, 17-8, 22; Hamilton, 1981). Switzerland has become a European model of a multinational federation. Today there are fewer than twenty federations in the world (in 1970, out of 130 states, twenty-one

⁷¹ Historically also, confederations eased internal conflicts because their members renounced the use of violence in internal disputes among the members. (Degan, 1991, 30-42).

⁷² Duchacek identified ten criteria for the evaluation of federalism: (1) whether the central authority controls diplomacy and defence; (2) whether the federation is immune to dissolution or separation; (3) whether the central government decisions directly oblige the citizens; (4) who has the right to change the federal constitutions; (5) whether the federal units are protected from their identity and rights being endangered; (6) whether the units, regardless of their size, are equally represented (particularly in the upper house of the assembly); (7) whether there are two networks of courts (for the federal and other laws); (8) whether there is a court that can rule in the conflict about the jurisdiction between the federal bodies and the bodies of the units; (9) whether the units have residual power (after the taxatively defined competences of the common state) and whether it is significant; (10) whether the territorial division of authority is transparent (Duchacek, 1970, 207-8).

were federations), but they cover half of the globe's territory.⁷³ Historically, federations may be divided into five groups: (1) USA as a model of modern federation (in fact, a singular case); (2) the former British colonies of Australia, Canada, India, Nigeria; (3) Latin American countries under American influence; (4) European federations of Austria, Germany, Switzerland; (5) the former communist federations of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (today's Yugoslavia as well).

Communist federations provided the cultural but not the political autonomy, but they preserved their national consciousness alive and within the formal federalism, with the right to self-determination, paved the way for the later dissolution. Since the integrative power of communist federations was concentrated in the party centralism and the command centralised economy, the demise of the communist regime also meant the end of communist federations. Democratisation brought on by the collapse of communism made possible the realisation of the right of nations to self-determination.⁷⁴ In recent literature, the European Union is increasingly called a federation. The elements of federalism within the EU are noticeable even today: the Court of Justice and the legal system, majority voting in the Council of Europe, direct elections for the European Parliament and some of its rights, enhanced position of the European Commission as the executive authority. The 1991 Maastricht Agreement fortified EU's federal features, while the final realisation of the economic and monetary union (EMU) as well as the planned expansion onto the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, are going to more or less round off the process of shaping the EU as a federation (Burgess, 1993, 59-64).

Federations are divided into two major groups. Multinational federalism exists in India, Burma, Nigeria, Switzerland, Belgium, Canada and formerly in the USSR, Yugoslavia (today only formally in Milošević's Yugoslavia) and Czechoslovakia (after 1968). Mononational federalism is at work in the USA, Australia, Latin America, Germany, Austria (Duchacek, 1970, 293-7; Forsyth, 1989, 3-4) and to a large extent in Russia. It is not hard to notice that the mononational federations are politically more stable, apart from Switzerland which is a stable democracy despite its complicated national composition.⁷⁵

Successful federations involve voluntarism and consent among the constituent units. The imposed federations as a rule are not stable. That is why democracy is a prerequisite of federalism. Federations are incompatible with undemocratic regimes. All democ-

⁷³ Five out of six biggest world countries are federations: Australia, Brazil, Canada, USA, and Russia (until 1991 USSR); the exception is the unitary China.

⁷⁴ In all the reforms of the former communist regimes in the USSR, Eastern Europe and particularly in Yugoslavia, parallelly with democratisation there was the process of decentralisation. E. J. Hobsbawm mentioned that rule even earlier, on the example of the relation between Britain and Ireland: "The United Kingdom, as Gladstone recognised, lost Ireland as soon as the democratisation of the suffrage in 1884-5 made it clear that practically all Catholic seats in the parliament on the Irish island after that would belong to one of the Irish (i.e. nationalist) parties..." (Hobsbawm, 1993, 94).

⁷⁵ Switzerland needed more than 600 years, and a period of wars and conflicts, to build a stable multiethnic federation. It was helped by geography (inaccessibility of the cantons), the fact that the religious, ethnic, and party divisions did not coincide, the interests of the neighbouring countries in having a buffer state, and the policy of neutrality (Duchacek, 1970, 328-9).

racies are not federations, but all genuine federations are democracies.⁷⁶ Federalism is affected also by the party system and the level of organisation. In federations, parties have a tendency of paralleling state structures; logically, since they fight to gain control over that structure. In Belgium, Canada, Scotland, and Wales, the divisions in the national arena affect the divisions among the parties. In communist regimes, the centralising influence of the party on federations was critical – the Soviet and the Czechoslovakian federalism was thus only formal. In 1969, in the former Yugoslavia, the Communist Party (SKJ) was federalised; this strengthened the genuine federalism of the 1974 Constitution and enabled, more than any other element of the political system, the later dissolution of the federation.⁷⁷ The dominant position of the Congress Party in India fostered the unitary tendencies in this country, while the loose structure of the parties in USA, Switzerland, and Canada has resulted in the enhanced federalism.⁷⁸ The genuineness of federalism is affected by the decision on the official language or languages in a federation, which may contribute to the domination of one nation (Russian in the Soviet federation, Serbian in the former Yugoslavia's military) or the true equality of a federation's members (Switzerland, Canada, even India) (Duchacek, 1970, 298-309; The Emergent World Language System, 1993, 219-308). Of course, the economic position of federal units and the rights in this field decisively influence whether the nature of a particular federation is genuine or only formal. In almost all federations, the fiscal rights of the centre have become bigger. Despite this, federalism does establish the interdependence of the units and the centre, provides for the autonomy of minorities, increases the democratic quality of decision-making and relieves political tensions.

Consociational Democracy

The idea of consociational democracy as opposed to the democracy that functions exclusively on the ground of achieved majority (majoritarian democracy, Westminster model) has been developed mostly by political scientist Arend Lijphart.⁷⁹ Consociational democracy is particularly applicable to societies in which ethnic, religious, regional, cultural, and political divisions are such that they give rise to separate segments

⁷⁶ Cf.: Duchacek, 1970, 335; Burgess, 1993, 6, 17, 39; Hague, 1992, 271; Linz, 1996, 19; Friedrich, 1968, 26).

⁷⁷ The federalisation with the elements of confederalisation of the Yugoslav Communist Party was very strong. The federal party organs were elected in the republics, the republics' parties had control over all important appointments and elections at the level of the federation and the republics, the federal Communist Party bodies were composed on the basis of the parity of the representatives of republics' organisations.

⁷⁸ Duchacek, 1970, 329-41; Hague, 1992, 273; Friedrich, 1968, 47-51. Epstein warns that where parties were created before the period of the centralisation of the state, like in the US, they have remained relatively decentralised (both in US and Canada). In Switzerland the parties operate on the cantonal level, while on the federal level they are almost confederal. In Germany, the party structure emerged at the time when today's federalism was not established and that is why their parties have a strong nation-wide appeal (Epstein, 1982, 31-3).

⁷⁹ Lijphart was the first to use the term consociational democracy in his study of the Dutch political system (Lijphart, 1968).

(the so-called plural society, segmented pluralism). Political engineering of consociational democracy has four main elements. The first is the coalition of political elites (the so-called grand coalition), the second is the minority veto concerning fundamental issues, the third is proportionality in the distribution of political representation and public funds (with the overrepresentation of smaller and weaker segments) and the fourth is autonomy of each segment in its internal affairs. The consociational democracy model can be successfully applied provided there are certain favourable background conditions such as: divisions that cross (and not overlap), a multiple balance of power instead of bipolarity, absence of the dominant segment, same-size segments without economic inequalities, small number of segments (3-5), whether the segments are homogenous and isolated and whether their size and power do not change, if the countries are small, if there is external danger for all, if there is the tradition of political accommodation and tolerance and the awareness of the danger of an impending conflict, if there is co-operation among the elites and if they enjoy a stable popular support, if the elites are able to control the masses, if there is loyalty to the common state. However, the most important aspect is the acceptance of the model by the segments; without this, there is no consociational democracy. Giving up on the consensus is the end of the application of this model.⁸⁰

Switzerland is the most successful example of this model (since 1970). It functions smoothly only there. In all other countries the consociational principle was only a transitory phase.⁸¹ In Lebanon, the Maronite Christians, the Sunni Muslims, the Shiite Muslims, the Orthodox Christians, and ten smaller creeds successfully shared power within the consociational model. The conflict and the ensuing civil war erupted when the numbers changed and the balance was tipped on the Muslim side. On Cyprus, the majority Greeks wanted to give up on consociation because, in their opinion, the minority Turks had too many rights which allegedly stood in the way of the efficacy of the political system.⁸² Naturally, this model has its drawbacks: slow decision-making process, the risk of deadlock, and inefficiency. But all this is incomparable to the price of renouncing the model: instability and violent hostilities. Consociational democracy cannot solve all the problems, but it can undoubtedly solve some.

⁸⁰ Cf.: Lijphart, 1992, 9-10, 32. 56-60, 149-52, 159-63; Kellas, 1991, 77, 135-9, 144; Duchacek, 1970, 105-6; Barry, 1975, 393-412; Daalder, 1974, 604-21; McRae, 1974; Steiner, 1974. When, along the consociational lines, a "cantonal" solution was proposed for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and consequently the Dayton Accords, the local elites did not accept it. The problem of the model that has operated so successfully in Switzerland was that there were no Swiss people in Bosnia.

⁸¹ Holland 1917-1967, Luxembourg during the approximately same time, Lebanon 1943-1975, Cyprus 1960-1963, Belgium, Austria, Canada 1977, Israel, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India, Nigeria, and the former Yugoslavia in the functioning of the federation from the 1974 Constitution to 1989.

⁸² That used to be the central argument of the Belgrade politics against the consociational elements in the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution. The result of the Serbian rejection of the model was the same as in Cyprus: an armed conflict and the division of the country.

Nonterritorial Autonomy

When there is no territorial concentration of the members of a national group, the solution for its interests may be provided by the concept of the so-called nonterritorial (personal or cultural) autonomy. History of nonterritorial autonomy begins with the medieval rights of religious communities and feudal classes. In the Finnish parliament in the 19th century, its four houses served to secure such rights for the Swedish nobility and citizenry, and for the Finnish clergy and peasants. In the Polish-Lithuanian state until 1764, the Jewish community enjoyed extraordinary rights. In the Ottoman Empire, the millet system enabled autonomy to religious communities since the 15th century; they could independently manage their educational, religious, and family affairs within their millet (originally for the Orthodox Church, the Armenian Catholic Church and in the 19th century also for the Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Uniates; Muslims also had their own millet). In the 19th century Austro-Hungarian Empire in Transylvania, three ethnic groups were represented in the local assembly and could design their own cultural policy. The principle notoriously failed in 1871 for the German-Czech relations in Bohemia. In Moravia, the principle was introduced for the Czechs and the Germans in the 1905 elections (separate lists and voting) and for separate educational authorities. In Bukovina in 1910, a nonterritorial participation in local government along ethnic lines was blocked (Coakley, 1994, 298-300). In line with the personal nonterritorial autonomy, Otto Bauer and Karl Renner tried to find a solution for the problems of the non-Germanic peoples in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Using the free choice of individuals for national groups as the starting point, autonomous cultural communities would be formed.⁸³ In Lithuania between two world wars, there was a nonterritorial educational autonomy of the minorities, and in Ireland the same principle was applied to Protestants. In Estonia, the 1925 law guaranteed to the ethnic groups with more than 3,000 members the educational and cultural nonterritorial autonomy (separate cultural councils and independent revenue resources for these activities). Germans and Jews made use of this opportunity. At the end of the apartheid in South Africa, separate parliamentary houses for the whites, the coloreds, the Asians and the blacks were established, to preserve the racist rule of the white minority.

Nowadays, the domicile population of New Zealand (Maoris, 13% of the population) enjoys the benefit of voting for separate electoral lists and councils for the bodies of nonterritorial autonomy. In Norway, there are advisory councils for the Saames (1% of the population); in Fiji there are separate electoral lists for the Melanese and the Indian immigrants (ratio 50:50) (Coakley, 1994, 307-12). However, the most striking example of the nonterritorial principle after 1970 was introduced by a constitutional amendment in Belgium. The newly-created Belgian federalism (1992) involves a combination of the territorial and the nonterritorial units. Belgium is divided into three territorial regions (Flanders, Walloons, and Brussels), three communities (French, Flemish,

⁸³ The cultural autonomy proposal is developed in the book by Springer, R. (Karl Renner's pseudonym), *Der Kampf der oesterreichischen Nation um den Staat*. Leipzig, Vienna, Franz Deuticke, 1902 (Bauer, 1983). In 1913, Lenin opposed the idea of cultural autonomy by saying that it is not possible to separate cultural activities from the government politics in general and that it would lead to the segregation that would disadvantage the less developed nations (Lenin, 1948, 455-8).

and German) responsible for culture, education, and personal affairs (health care, welfare), and four linguistic regions (the French-speaking, the Dutch-speaking, the bilingual Brussels region and the German-speaking region). The regions (territorial) and the communities compete in the composition of the Senate and have their own representative and executive bodies.⁸⁴

The nonterritorial approach has mostly been temporary, but for the territorially dispersed national groups or minorities it has proved very important. The Belgian example proves that the prolonged accommodation and the harmonisation of interests can lead to successful institutional solutions.

Prerequisites of a Peaceful Solution

1. The emergence of nations is not a historical deviation, but a normal and concomitant occurrence of the positive historical development. The establishment of democracy created some elbowroom for the affirmation of nations in post-communism. The role of the nationalist activity in these events was not central. The disintegration of the former communist federations was not a fortuitous event and had a common cause. The redefinition of the nationality issue, though inevitable, produces conflicts.

2. Inter-national conflicts are potentially dangerous and violence-laden.

3. Conflicts cannot be avoided by denying national identities and national rights, by ignoring real or imagined problems, but by confronting them.

4. Nationality issues cannot be eliminated but regulated. Political theory and practice have developed numerous mechanisms for the accommodation of conflicting rights. Their recognition and implementation can only help in the non-violent resolution of disputes. Ignorance is not only harmful, but can be dangerous as well, because it stimulates exaggerated and biased expectations which may produce volatile and baleful outcomes.

5. Concrete solutions will always depend on the balance of political powers in each case. International practice, universally accepted principles, international community's pressures and its early direct involvement can contribute to the finding of the solution and the avoidance of violent options.

6. Bigotry, partiality, and demanding more rights than implied by rational standards means cruising for a bruising, asking for trouble, which can get the conflicting parties the short end of a stick. Extremist nationalism and chauvinism are dangerous not only for the other side, but affect negatively the nation which generates it. This rule applies both to the dominant nation in a state and to the minority nations.

7. Democracy and tolerance make a positive environment for a successful regulation of inter-national disputes. Violent and unilateral imposition of solutions only worsens

⁸⁴ The bodies of the Flemish region are integrated into the council of the Flemish community (Fitzmaurice, 1996, 122-3; Blaustein, 1994, Articles 1-5, 67, 115-34; Smith, G. 1995, 87-8).

the situation and makes it explosive in the long run. A democratic society reduced to a dominant nation is not feasible unless national rights are recognised and implemented for all those who live in that state. Minority nations cannot realise their rights unless they take into consideration the democratic system on the whole and democratic rights for everybody. Democratic societies are nationally tolerant societies. And vice versa.

8. Democracy and nation-building are not incompatible but contradictory notions. They are immanent to post-communist societies. Nation-building, despite everything, creates the conditions for the emergence of stable states, the only stable framework of the political and the economic transition (Jahn, 1992, 68).

9. The unresolved and undecided nationality issues significantly aggravate the consolidation of democracy. The transitional countries are faced not only with the problem of the transition to democracy and market economy, but also with the need of solving inter-national questions in the redefined post-cold-war and post-communist circumstances. Shying away from the attempt to solve nationality issues is a stone hanging around the neck of the transitional countries. The solution for the nationality issue is the precondition for the democratic transition (Linz, 1996, 24-33).

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